2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
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primary causes of polygyny is that "There are no other men." Like Wanyekí,[10] the first husband of Amendó, a man may acquire two or more wives because there "are no other men around." But although this was true in the case of Wanyekí who lived far away from other people, it is necessary to remember that it is easier to give this as a blanket explanation than to bother about the numerous causes of a man's taking two or more wives. Among the young men on the reservation today there are several young bachelors; Nanmblá, however, has two wives.

Kuthúgn, old Thunder Storm, on the other hand, went around without a wife for years until his older brother died, leaving two wives, and Kuthúgn married them. But the Kaingáng do not impose or bestow on men the duty or the privilege of marrying their dead brothers' wives, nor do they compel widows to marry their brothers-in-law. Since the Kaingáng have no lien on spouses, since spouses are not conceived of as belonging to one group that has bought them or whose entire pattern of affinal exchanges is based on their permanent attachment to it, and since, furthermore, no group has given a man or woman in marriage in exchange for one received from a different group, there is no mechanism to compel a widow or widower to accept any particular new spouse. The ideology of mourning and the isolation of the widowed shows a complete lack of interest in these things.

A widowed person is dangerous, for the ghost of the departed clings to its last earthly vestiges in the hair of the surviving spouse that touched its own while living and under the nails where the dirt from food cooked or killed for the one now dead still lies. It follows its spouse about wherever it goes, for it is loath to give up its earthly attachments. It is a menace not only to the surviving spouse but to the whole community, for no one knows whom it may select as desirable to keep it company in the land of souls. So the widowed must be got out of camp for two weeks or two months, until the attachment of the ghost is enfeebled. Then, at the end of this time of fasting from the foods that he killed for his wife or that she cooked for her husband, the spouse is brought back with hair and nails cut off and is thus freed from the dirt that was so close a link to the ghost. Before the Kaingáng came to the reservation the return of the surviving spouse was the occasion for an elaborate ritual. With head covered with feathers as a disguise to fool the ghost, with wholesome herbs strewn in the path, to the noise of frantic singing and rattling to frighten the ghost away the widowed person came back and soon began his sex life anew. When the ghost of her husband had been frightened away contact with the woman was safe, for Kaingáng ghosts do not suffer from sexual jealousy after the first few weeks but oscillate eerily between the land of the dead and the dwellings of the living, harassed by a loneliness that urges them from time to time to

[10] He and Amendó died in about 1905.

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snatch away some human being to bear them company. If the ghost longs 765
to renew intercourse and return at night for this purpose, it is the old spouse who suffers, never the new partner. No woman remains a widow because men are afraid to marry her. The Kaingáng are forever daring the supernatural anyway.

The children belong to their parents, if one can speak of "belonging" in 593
a society in which children are not valued as property. What we so strongly idealize the Kaingáng actually feel, for to them children are like highly charged emotional batteries. They are valued for their potentialities as emotionally satisfying living things, like most other pets.[11] There is no idea expressed that when they grow up they will feed and protect their parents,[12] 887
for in nomadic days the latter knew only too well the whims that urged and the necessities that compelled their children to wander away from them. They themselves had felt the desire to go north or west or east to see the country or to attack the Brazilians, and they too had left their own parents to follow the camps of their wives' relatives. But when children are left fatherless it often devolves upon the father's family to take care of them, for they feel that responsibility, and it is in this way that it comes about that a widow often marries someone of her husband's kin. She goes where her [587]
children are, and it is there, in the midst of her husband's close kin, that she begins her sex life anew and often finds her new husband.

It is a similar factor of residence that brings it about that in the majority 595
of cases the co-spouses in a polygynous or polyandrous marriage are either siblings or first cousins. For in the closer relationship that springs up among the members of the families related by marriage the most obvious choice is a person whom one sees all the time and with whom, therefore, one delights to have an affair. Since this choice rests almost wholly with the widow and since it is conditioned by a large number of accidental factors, principally what men are available at the moment, her new husband is as likely to be older than her dead husband as younger. Even when he is past middle age a man is still a vigorous hunter, and even if he is an old man, he can depend on someone to help toward the support of his household. His wife may philander as she will, but she is still his wife, and if he [584]
catches or suspects her he may beat her or even put a club through her chest.

If we were to believe Yatí as quoted by Thunder Storm's son, we could say that Thunder Storm acquired his third wife because he was an outstanding figure. But I am inclined to doubt this. His third wife was

[11] The Kaingáng, like many South American peoples, keep pet monkeys, pigs, quail and hawks. Only the latter are used—for their feathers. Dogs are not pets; emotionally they belong rather in the category of wardrobe human beings.

[12] It is true, nevertheless, that the parents could generally depend to some extent on their children's help, particularly before marriage.